

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water,
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

Funding Opportunity Title: Training and Technical Assistance for Small and/or Rural
Public Water Systems

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OGWDW-07-02

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 66.424

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by the Agency Contact (see Section IV of this RFP) by **4:30 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) August 22, 2007**, or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 PM EDT August 22, 2007**. Questions about this Request for Proposals must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency contact identified in Section VII before **August 7, 2007**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's web site at: www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal has been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

Summary:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems to develop and expand the capabilities of those systems to meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). National Priority Areas are: (1) Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection; and (2) Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations.

The goal of this announcement is to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems so that they can operate and maintain their systems to comply with SDWA requirements and provide an adequate level of protection for their drinking water sources. This goal is tied to Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, Sub-Objective 2.1.1: Water Safe to Drink of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

Eligible applicants are states, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the United States, including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible. Nonprofit organizations described in Section

501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in prohibited lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible.

The total amount of expected funding available under this announcement is approximately \$8 million, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that one to two awards will be made in each of the two National Priority Areas described in this announcement.

It is anticipated that awards made under the Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection National Priority Area will range from \$1 million to \$3 million and awards made for the Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations National Priority Area will range from \$2 million to \$5 million.

Section I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objectives

EPA is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems to develop and expand the capabilities of those systems to meet the requirements of SDWA. Public water systems include community water systems, and other small and rural non-community systems such as hospitals, schools, or mobile home parks. The majority of community water systems in the nation (94 percent) serve less than 10,000 people. Approximately 60 percent of these systems serve less than 150 connections.

Assistance will be provided to address two National Priority Areas: (1) Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection; and (2) Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations. The two National Priority Areas support Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, Sub-Objective 2.1.1: Water Safe to Drink of EPA's Strategic Plan. Funding will be awarded only for the two National Priority Areas as described below in Section I.B.

The statutory authority for this announcement is Section 1442 of the SDWA. This SDWA section authorizes EPA to provide grants: (1) for training personnel who manage or operate public water systems; (2) for training personnel for occupations involving the public health aspects of providing safe drinking water; and (3) for training to develop and expand the capabilities of states and municipalities to carry out the SDWA. This section also authorizes EPA to make grants for technical assistance to enable small public water systems to meet the requirements of SDWA.

B. National Priority Areas

Proposals to fund projects under this announcement must address one, and only one, of the following National Priority Areas described below: (1) Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection; or (2) Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems

Operations. Applicants may submit more than one complete project proposal package (including SF 424, SF 424A, and proposal narrative) under this announcement. However, each complete proposal package must address only **one** National Priority Area. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Area addressed in the proposal.

1. Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection

EPA is soliciting proposals to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems to develop and implement source water (ground water and surface water) protection plans and wellhead protection plans. Public water systems include community water systems, and other small and rural non-community systems such as hospitals, schools, or mobile home parks.

Protecting drinking water sources through source water and wellhead protection enhances public health protection and minimizes the potential of contamination and thus SDWA violations. Training and technical assistance should focus on assisting small and/or rural public water systems to develop and implement source water and wellhead protection plans. In their proposals, applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems to develop and implement source water protection plans and wellhead protection plans. Examples of training and technical assistance activities that support this National Priority Area are provided below.

Source Water Protection Plans: Training and technical assistance activities to support the development and implementation of source water protection plans for small and/or rural public water systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide training and technical assistance to develop and implement source water protection plans with regulatory and/or non-regulatory measures or strategies for addressing the most important potential sources of contamination;
- Provide training and technical assistance to facilitate the review of state source water assessments, and supplement assessments as necessary with refined source water protection area delineations and inventories of potential sources of contamination;
- Provide training and technical assistance to facilitate efforts to gauge interest in source water protection, and enlist volunteers to form local steering committees to guide projects; and/or
- Provide training and technical assistance to develop, update, and implement contingency plans containing strategies for supplying safe water to the consumer in the event of contamination or disruption of services.

Wellhead Protection Plans: Training and technical assistance activities to support the development and implementation of wellhead protection plans for small and/or rural public water systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide training and technical assistance to develop and implement wellhead protection plans with regulatory and/or non-regulatory measures or strategies for addressing the most important potential sources of contamination;
- Provide training and technical assistance to facilitate efforts to gauge interest in wellhead protection, and enlist volunteers to form local steering committees to guide projects; and/or
- Provide training and technical assistance to develop, update, and implement contingency plans containing strategies for supplying safe water to the consumer in the event of contamination or disruption of services.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Area is addressed (see Section V). EPA anticipates funding approximately one to two awards under this National Priority Area. It is anticipated that awards will range from \$1 million to \$3 million, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). It is anticipated that the project periods for these awards will be 18 months.

2. Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations

EPA is soliciting proposals to provide training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems for rule implementation, capacity development, and water systems operations. Public water systems include community water systems, and other small and/or rural non-community systems such as hospitals, schools, or mobile home parks.

Small and/or rural public water systems face many challenges in providing safe drinking water and meeting the requirements of SDWA. These challenges include: (1) continuous turnover of operations personnel; (2) part-time personnel who lack necessary technical, financial, and managerial skills; (3) volunteer boards and councils; and (4) lack of knowledge of increasingly complex drinking water regulations and how to prevent regulatory non-compliance.

Training and technical assistance should focus on assisting small and/or rural public water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with applicable national primary drinking water regulations. In their proposals, applicants should describe their proposed approach for providing training and technical assistance to small and/or rural public water systems for rule implementation, capacity development, and water systems operations. Examples of training and technical assistance activities that support this National Priority Area are provided below.

Rule Implementation: Training and technical assistance activities to support rule implementation may involve assisting operators and owners of small and/or rural public water systems in understanding SDWA regulatory requirements and ensuring that they can achieve and maintain compliance. Training and technical assistance activities to

support rule implementation for small and/or rural public water systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide operator training and technical assistance on compliance with the requirements of SDWA regulations,
- Provide operator training and technical assistance on monitoring requirements; and/or
- Provide operator training and technical assistance on state drinking water standards.

Capacity Development: Training and technical assistance to support capacity development may involve assisting operators and owners of small and/or rural public water systems with the technical, managerial, and/or financial capacity of their systems. Technical capacity refers to the physical infrastructure of the water system, including but not limited to the adequacy of the source water, adequacy of the system's infrastructure (source, treatment, storage, and distribution), and the ability of system personnel to apply necessary technical knowledge. Managerial capacity refers to the management structure of the water system, including but not limited to ownership accountability, staffing and organization, and effective linkages to customers and regulatory agencies. Financial capacity refers to the financial resources of the water system, including but not limited to revenue sufficiency, credit worthiness, and fiscal controls. Training and technical assistance activities to support capacity development for small and/or rural public water systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide training and technical assistance to improve knowledge and skill competency in technical, managerial, and/or financial capacity of drinking water system personnel;
- Provide training sessions for water system board members;
- Provide training and technical assistance to develop and/or refine capacity development self-assessment tools;
- Provide operator certification training; and/or
- Provide training and technical assistance in developing and implementing appropriate record keeping practices.

Water Systems Operations: Training and technical assistance to support water systems operations may involve assisting operators and owners of small and/or rural public water systems in determining their systems' infrastructure and security needs. Training and technical assistance activities to support water systems operations for small and/or rural public water systems may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide training and technical assistance to diagnose and trouble-shoot compliance-related problems and identify solutions;
- Develop and provide tools to assess treatment, storage, and distribution system issues and identify low-cost alternative technology and management techniques;
- Provide technical assistance in asset management implementation and determining future public water system water quantity requirements; and/or
- Provide technical assistance in identifying and solving security considerations and responding to disasters and national emergencies.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including how well and thoroughly the National Priority Area is addressed (see Section V). EPA anticipates funding approximately one to two awards under this National Priority Area. It is anticipated that awards will range from \$2 million to \$5 million, depending on the amount requested and the overall size and scope of the project(s). It is anticipated that the project periods for these awards will be 18 months.

C. National Training and Technical Assistance Approach

In their proposals, applicants should demonstrate their ability, and describe an approach, to make training and technical assistance in a National Priority Area available on a national basis. Applicants may make training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states through a combination of face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance approaches. Training and technical assistance may take the form of:

- (1) Face-to-face training and on-site technical assistance: this includes, for example, classroom training, workshops, and circuit-riders or other multi-state and/or regional approaches to provide on-site technical assistance; and
- (2) Remote training and technical assistance: this includes, for example, web casts, distance learning, and phone consultations.

Training and technical assistance may also include developing training materials, developing and maintaining websites, or developing and providing educational and outreach materials that can be used nationally and/or with state specific variations, as appropriate.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section V including the demonstrated ability and described approach to make training and technical assistance available in all 50 states through a combination of face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance (see Section V). In their proposals, applicants should include a discussion of how they will consult with the states in which training and technical assistance is to be provided to determine priorities of either specific small and/or rural public water systems, or specific geographical areas, within the state(s). In their proposals, applicants will also need to include a discussion of how they will transfer results and effective strategies for ensuring compliance and for providing an adequate level of protection of drinking water supplies to other small and/or rural public water systems, states, tribes, local governments, and other interested stakeholders.

D. EPA's Strategic Plan and Anticipated Environmental Results

The training and technical assistance projects funded under this announcement support EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>). All assistance agreements awarded under this announcement will support Goal 2: Clean and Safe Water, Objective 2.1: Protect Human Health, Sub-Objective 2.1.1: Water Safe to Drink. This announcement is consistent with EPA's priority to support small and/or rural public water systems by funding training and technical assisting to ensure

compliance with SDWA requirements and protect sources of drinking water from contamination under two of the four key elements of Objective 2.1.1.

All proposed projects must address the Strategic Plan priorities and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that will demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall protection of human health by ensuring safe drinking water and protecting source water supplies.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement for the Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection National Priority Area include, but are not limited to:

- An increased number of small and/or rural public water systems that have developed and implemented source water and wellhead protection plans.
- An increased number of small and/or rural public water systems receiving training and technical assistance in source water and wellhead protection.

Examples of anticipated environmental outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement for the Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations National Priority Area include, but are not limited to:

- An increased number of small and/or rural public water systems receiving training and technical assistance in rule implementation, capacity development, and water systems operations.
- Expanded community of small and/or rural water system operators trained to comply with drinking water standards.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project's performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short-term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement for the Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection National Priority Area include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased knowledge and capacity of small and/or rural water systems in the areas of source water and wellhead protection.

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement for the Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations National Priority Area include, but are not limited to the following:

- Increased number of small and/or rural public water systems in compliance with SDWA.
- Increased knowledge of small and/or rural public water system operators in the areas of rule implementation, capacity development, and water systems operations.

As part of the proposal narrative, an applicant will be required to describe how the project results will link the outcomes to the Agency's Strategic Plan. Additional information regarding EPA's discussion of environmental results in terms of "outputs" and "outcomes" can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700.7.pdf>.

Section II. Award Information

The total amount of funding expected to be available under this announcement is approximately \$8 million, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately one to two awards will be made in each National Priority Area described in this announcement. It is anticipated that awards made under the Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection National Priority Area will range from \$1 million to \$3 million, and awards made for the Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations National Priority Area will range from \$2 million to \$5 million. It is anticipated that awards funded under this announcement will have 18 month project periods.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement, or to make fewer awards than anticipated. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

It is anticipated that grants and/or cooperative agreements may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project work plans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial federal involvement may include:

1. Participation in trainings and/or technical assistance activities;
2. Close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
3. Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
4. In accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements.
5. Review qualifications of key personnel (EPA will not select employees or contractors employed by the award recipient); and/or
6. Review and comment on tasks/deliverables (i.e., addressing lessons learned in subsequent years) and reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

EPA awards funds to one eligible applicant as the "recipient" even if other eligible applicants are named as "partners" or "co-applicants" or members of a "coalition" or "consortium." The recipient is accountable to EPA for the proper expenditure of funds.

Funding may be used to acquire services or to provide subgrants or subawards of financial assistance to fund partnerships provided the recipient complies with applicable requirements for subawards or subgrants including those contained in 40 CFR Parts 30 or 31, as appropriate. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by the procurement provisions of these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their proposals. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the proposal EPA approves does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements. Please note that applicants may not award sole source contracts to consulting, engineering or other firms assisting applicants with the proposal based solely on the firm's role in preparing the proposal.

Subgrants or subawards may be used to fund partnerships with nonprofit organizations and nonfederal governmental entities. Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products to carry out its assistance agreement. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subawardee or subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section 210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of "subaward" at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or "subgrant" at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

Section III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are states, territories, Indian Tribes, and possessions of the U.S., including the District of Columbia, public and private universities and colleges, hospitals, laboratories, other public or private nonprofit institutions. Individuals and for-profit organizations are not eligible. Nonprofit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a nonprofit organization in OMB Circular A-122. Nonprofit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

There are no cost-sharing or matching requirements.

C. Threshold Eligibility Criteria

These are requirements that, if not met by the time of proposal submission, will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of this announcement. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
2. An applicant's proposal must address one, and only one, of the National Priority Areas listed in Section I.B. Applicants may submit more than one complete project proposal package (including proposal narrative, SF 424, and SF 424A) under this announcement. However, each proposal package must address only **one** National Priority Area (i.e., Training and Technical Assistance for Source Water and Wellhead Protection or Training and Technical Assistance for Rule Implementation, Capacity Development, and Water Systems Operations) listed in Section I.B. The cover page of each proposal package must clearly indicate the National Priority Area that is addressed. Proposals that address more than one National Priority Area will not be reviewed.
3. Proposals must substantially comply with the submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal and/or parts of the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
4. Proposals must be received by EPA or submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov> on or before the announcement closing date and time published in Section IV.D of this announcement. Proposals received by EPA or through Grants.gov after the published closing date and time will be returned to the sender without further consideration.

5. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service.

Proposals submitted by any type of U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

Section IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Packages

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms (SF) 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants and Interagency Management Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. Form of Application Submission

Applicants have the option of submitting their proposal packages (as described in Section IV.C below) in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website; or 2) by hard copy to the EPA contact identified in Section IV.B.2. via hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. All proposal packages must be prepared, and include the information as described in Section IV.C below, regardless of mode of transmission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their proposal packages electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required package, it can submit it electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency.

The electronic submission of your proposal package must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for the announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the "PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OGWDW-07-02**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.424), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button "How To Apply" at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on

<http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the “Find Grant Opportunities” button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Proposal Package Submission Deadline

Your organization’s AOR must submit your complete proposal package electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 PM EDT August 22, 2007**.

Please submit *all* of the proposal materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Proposal materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

How to submit your proposal package through Grants.gov

Applicants are required to submit the following documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov. All documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

- For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare this as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments (such as letters of support or annotated resumes) that you would like to submit to accompany your proposal, you may click “add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”
- The following 2 additional documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.
 1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 2. SF 424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- For each document, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow.

Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY07 – Tech Assist for Small Water Systems – 1st Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name –FY07 Tech Assist for Small Water Systems– 2nd Submission.” Once your proposal package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the proposal package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the proposal package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the proposal package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Debra Gutenson at 1-202-564-3882 or email at techassisttrfp@epa.gov. If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the proposal package deadline, please contact Debra Gutenson as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Hard Copy and CD Submission

Three hard copies of the complete proposal package and an electronic version on a CD, as described in IV.C below are required to be submitted by hand delivery, express mail service, or courier service. Electronic files on the CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc). Letters of support and annotated resumes will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD.

Proposals submitted by U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

The address for hard copy submission is:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
EPA East Building, Room 2140C
1201 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
Attn: Debra Gutenson

C. Content of Application Submission

A complete proposal package *must* include the following materials:

1. Standard Form (SF) 424 – Application for Federal Assistance

Complete the form. There are no attachments. Please be sure to include the organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the SF 424.

Please note that the organizational Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number must be included on the SF-424. Organizations may obtain a DUNS number at no cost by calling the toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

2. Standard Form (SF) 424A – Budget Information

Complete the form. There are no attachments. The total amount of federal funding requested for the project period should be shown on line 5(e) and on line 6(k) of the SF 424A. If indirect costs are included, the amount of indirect costs should be entered on line 6(j). The indirect cost rate (i.e., a percentage), the base (e.g., personnel costs and fringe benefits), and the amount should also be indicated on line 22.

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must be limited to no more than fourteen (14) typewritten double-spaced 8.5 x 11 pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal narrative. Additional pages beyond the 14 page limit will not be considered. Hard copy submissions may be submitted double-sided. If a single-spaced proposal narrative is submitted, it will be reviewed up to the equivalent of the 14 page double-spaced page limit; excess pages will not be reviewed (the 14 page double-spaced proposal narrative page limit would be the equivalent of 7 single-spaced pages; any single-spaced pages in excess of 7 will not be reviewed). Supporting materials (such as support letters and annotated resumes) are not included within the page limit.

The proposal narrative must be typewritten and must include the information listed below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal narrative.

1. Cover Page including:
 - a. Project title;
 - b. National Priority Area from Section I.B addressed in the proposal **(applicants must address only one National Priority Area per complete proposal package)**;
 - c. Name of applicant;
 - d. Key personnel and contact information (i.e., e-mail address and phone number); and
 - e. Total project cost and federal dollars requested.
2. Abstract/project summary: Brief description of the proposed project.
3. Project description containing:
 - a. Project Goals and Objectives:
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan (see Section I.D).
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.D).
 - iii. Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcomes) - List the anticipated environmental improvements that will be accomplished as a result of the project activities, and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s). These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which result from the accomplishment of project outputs (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.D).
 - iv. Environmental Results Past Performance - Briefly describe the federally-funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not. If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.
 - b. Describe how the project will address:
 - i. A National Priority Area identified in Section I.B.
 - ii. The National Training and Technical Assistance Approach:
Describe the proposed approach to making face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance available nationally in all

50 states (see Section I.C). The proposed approach should include an estimate of projected training and technical assistance activities per state, and detail on the types of training and technical assistance to be provided. The proposed approach may also include developing training materials, developing and maintaining websites, or developing and providing educational and outreach materials that can be used nationally and/or with state specific variations, as appropriate.

- iii. Approach for consulting with states to determine training and technical assistance priorities of either specific small and/or rural public water systems, or specific geographic areas, within the state(s).
- c. Project Tasks - Outline the steps you will take to plan and conduct the project. Include a description of roles and responsibilities, and the role of any partner entities, in carrying out the project.
 - d. Milestone Schedule - Provide a projected timeline for the proposed project period (up to 18 months). The project start date will follow award acceptance by the successful applicant. The timeline should show timeframes and major milestones to complete significant project tasks.
 - e. Provide a brief description of the applicant's organization and experience related to the proposed National Priority Area, and the organization's infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
 - f. Provide a brief description of project management and staff expertise/qualification. Describe the proposed management structure for the project. List key staff and describe their expertise/qualifications, knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project. List proposed partner entities, their roles, and whether they will participate as subgrantees. Annotated resumes of applicant's key staff and letters of support from potential partner entities are encouraged and will not count against the page limit for the proposal narrative.
 - g. Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer results and effective strategies for ensuring compliance and for providing an adequate level of protection of drinking water supplies to other small and/or rural public water systems, states, tribes, local governments, and other interested stakeholders.
- 4. Detailed Budget Narrative - Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A

such as “other” (including subgrants and subawards) and “contractual”. Total costs should include both federal and matching (non-federal) components (if applicable). Describe each item in sufficient detail for EPA to determine the reasonableness and allowability of its cost.

5. Briefly describe other federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years and describe: (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and (ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports. If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for these factors under Section V.

The applicant should also provide, to the extent not otherwise covered above, any information necessary to address the factors in Section V.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section IV.B.2 by **4:30 PM EDT August 22, 2007**. Proposals submitted electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 PM EDT August 22, 2007**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. Intergovernmental Review

This program may be eligible for coverage under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." An applicant should consult the office or official designated as the single point of contact in his or her State for more information on the process the State requires to be followed in applying for assistance, if the State has selected the program for review. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

F. Funding Restrictions

In accordance with EPA guidance and the OMB Circulars, as appropriate, the recipient must agree that it will not use assistance fund for prohibited lobbying, fund-raising or political activities (e.g., lobbying members of Congress, or lobbying for other federal grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts). Funds cannot be used to pay for travel by federal agency staff. Construction and land acquisition are not allowable activities, foreign travel is not permissible, and equipment purchases require written permission from the EPA Project Officer if they were not included in the approved application. Funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the assistance agreement, and use must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. The terms and conditions of the formal assistance agreement may include additional and specific limitations on funding.

G. Confidential Business Information

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals or portions of proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

Section V. Application Review Information

A. Selection Criteria

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (145 total point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) National Training and Technical Assistance Approach (40 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to make training and technical assistance available nationally in all 50 states through a combination of face-to-face/on-site and remote training and technical assistance (see Section I.C of this announcement) taking into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to provide face-to-face training and on-site technical assistance. (25 points)(ii) Extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to provide remote training and technical assistance. (15 points)
2) National Priority Area (20 points)	<p>Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project addresses one of the two National Priority Areas identified in Section I.B of this announcement. (20 points)</p>
3) Environmental Results (25 points)	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (10 points)(ii) Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for measuring and tracking progress toward achieving the anticipated outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.D of this announcement). (10 points)(iii) The extent and quality to which the applicant adequately documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (e.g., outputs and outcomes) under federally and/or non-federally funded

	<p>assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under (iii) above, EPA will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance reporting history will receive a neutral score for this factor of 2.5 points.</p>
4) Specific Proposal Narrative Elements (40 points)	<p>Proposals will be evaluated based on the following sub-criterion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Extent and quality to which the proposal includes a clearly articulated milestone schedule for project tasks. (10 points) (ii) The reasonableness of the budget and estimated funding amounts for each work component/task. Applicants will be evaluated based on the adequacy of the information provided in the detailed budget and whether the proposed costs are reasonable. Total project costs must include both federal and any voluntary matching (non-federal) components (if applicable). (10 points) (iii) A description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant in carrying out the project tasks. (10 points) (iv) A description of how the applicant will transfer results and effective strategies for ensuring compliance and for providing an adequate level of protection of drinking water supplies to other small and/or rural public water systems, states, tribes, local governments, and other interested stakeholders. (10 points)
5) Programmatic Capability/Past Performance (Technical Experience) and Qualifications) (20 points)	<p>Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Past performance in successfully completing federally and/or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years. (5 points) (ii) History of meeting reporting requirements under federally and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance performed within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (5 points) (iii) Organizational experience related to the proposed project topic area and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to

	<p>successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points)</p> <p>(iv) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)</p> <p>Note: In evaluating applicants under (i) and (ii) above, the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). Applicants with no relevant or available past performance information or reporting history will receive neutral scores for these factors (i.e., 2.5 points for item (i) and 2.5 points for item (ii)).</p>
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B. Review and Selection Process

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A review panel(s) will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a ranking list of the most highly rated proposals in each National Priority Area based on the evaluation scores received. The ranking list for each National Priority Area will be provided to the Selection Official who makes final funding decisions. In making the final funding decisions for each National Priority Area, the Selection Official will consider the proposal score and may also take into account programmatic priorities.

Section VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10). Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan narrative prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each component;
3. Commitments for each component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation.

A list of selected projects will be posted on EPA's Office Ground Water and Drinking Water website www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html. This website may also contain additional information about this RFP. Deadline extensions, if any, will be posted on this website and www.grants.gov.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The general award and administration process for assistance agreements are governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations), 40 CFR Part 31 (States, Tribes, interstate agencies, intertribal consortia and local governments), and 40 CFR Part 45 (Training Assistance). A description of the Agency's substantial involvement in the cooperative agreement will be included in the final agreement.

C. Reporting

In general, recipients are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities supported by the assistance funding, to assure compliance with applicable federal requirements, and for ensuring that established milestones and performance goals are being achieved. Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted quarterly and are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 90 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. In negotiating this cooperative agreement EPA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements in the work plan consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 31.40, and 40 CFR part 45.

D. Dispute Procedures

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies of the dispute procedures may also be requested by contacting Debra Gutenson at (202) 564-3882.

E. Administrative Capability Review

Non-profit applicants that are recommended for funding under this announcement are subject to pre-award administrative capability reviews consistent with Section 8b, 8c and 9d of EPA Order 5700.8 - Policy on Assessing Capabilities of Non-Profit Applicants for Managing Assistance Awards (http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/award/5700_8.pdf). In addition, non-profit applicants that qualify for funding may, depending on the size of the award, be required to fill out and submit to the Grants Management Office the Administrative Capabilities Form with supporting documents contained in Appendix A of EPA Order 5700.8.

Section VII. Agency Contact

Note to Applicants: EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below before **August 7, 2007** and written responses will be posted on EPA's website at www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys.html. In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals.

Agency Contact:
Debra Gutenson
E-mail: techassistrfp@epa.gov

Section VIII. Other Information

A. Copyrights

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for Federal Government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.